WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for facilitating transactions between a product brand manager and manufacturing organizations using a transactional computer system, the product brand manager having a product brand and product brand information comprising information for manufacturing the product brand, and there being manufacturing organization information for each of the manufacturing organizations comprising the manufacturing process capabilities of the respective manufacturing organization, the method comprising:

communicating the product brand information from the product brand manager to the transactional computer system;

communicating the manufacturing organization information for the manufacturing organizations from the manufacturing organizations to the transactional computer system;

using the transactional computer system to process the product brand information and the manufacturing organization information to select at least one candidate manufacturing organization from the manufacturing organizations and to generate selection information regarding the at least one candidate manufacturing organization, the selection comprising using the transactional computer system to compare the product brand information to the manufacturing organization information; and

using the transactional computer system to communicate the selection information to the product brand manager.

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2.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the communicating of the product brand information from the product brand manager to the transactional computer system is performed without human intervention at the transactional computer system.

5   3.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the communicating of the manufacturing organization information for the manufacturing organizations from the manufacturing organizations to the transactional computer system is performed without human intervention at the transactional computer system.

4.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the using of the transactional 10   computer system to process the product brand information and the manufacturing organization information to select at least one candidate manufacturing organization from the manufacturing organizations and to generate selection information regarding the at least one candidate manufacturing organization is performed without human intervention at the transactional computer system.

15   5.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the use of the transactional computer system to compare the product brand information to the manufacturing organization information is performed without human intervention at the transactional computer system.

6.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the use of the transactional 20   computer system to communicate the selection information to the product brand manager is performed without human intervention at the transactional computer system.

7.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein:

the product brand manager comprises a product brand manager computer; and

the transactional computer system is operatively coupled to the product

brand computer to communicate the product brand information from the product

brand computer and to communicate the selection information to the product brand

computer.

8.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein:

each of the manufacturing organizations comprises a manufacturing

organization computer; and

the transactional computer system is operatively coupled to each of the

manufacturing organization computers to receive the manufacturing organization

information from the manufacturing organization computers.

9.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein:

the product brand manager comprises a product brand manager computer;

each of the manufacturing organizations comprises a manufacturing

organization computer;

the transactional computer system is operatively coupled to the product

brand computer to communicate the product brand information from the product

brand computer and to communicate the selection information to the product brand

computer; and

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the transactional computer system is operatively coupled to each of the

manufacturing organization computers to receive the manufacturing organization

information from the manufacturing organization computers.

10.   A method as recited in claim 9, wherein the transactional computer

5   system receives the product brand information and the manufacturing organization

information from the product brand manager computer and the manufacturing

organization computer respectively without human intervention at the

transactional computer system and automatically selects the at least one candidate

manufacturing organization without human intervention at the transactional

10   computer system.

11.   A method as recited in claim 10, wherein the transactional computer

system generates the selection information without human intervention.

12.   A method as recited in claim 10, wherein the transactional computer

system communicates the selection information to the product brand manager

15   without human intervention.

13.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the transactional computer

system comprises at least one computer operatively coupled to a network.

14.   A method as recited in claim 13, wherein the transactional computer

system comprises a plurality of computers and a distributed database.

20   15.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the transactional computer

system comprises a local area network.

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16.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the transactional computer system comprises a wide area network.

17.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand manager comprises an owner of the product brand.

5   18.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand manager comprises a product development organization.

19.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand comprises a material manufactured by a batch chemical process.

20.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information communication comprises communicating the product brand information to comprise a general recipe.

21.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information communication comprises communicating the product brand information to comprise pricing information.

15   22.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information communication comprises communicating the product brand information to comprise schedule information.

23.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information communication comprises communicating the product brand information to comprise delivery information..

20   comprise delivery information..

24. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information communication comprises communicating the product brand information to comprise quality information.

25. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information communicating comprises communicating the product brand information in a general recipe format.

26. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information communicating comprises communicating the product brand information in a normalized format.

27. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organizations comprise contract manufacturing organizations.

28. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein each of the manufacturing organizations comprises a site.

29. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein each of the manufacturing organizations comprises an area.

30. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein each of the manufacturing organizations comprises a process cell.

31. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information comprises site information.

32. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information comprises area information.

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33. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information comprises process cell information.

34. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information comprises equipment information.

35. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information comprises flow information.

36. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information comprises scheduling information.

37. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information comprises price information.

38. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information comprises delivery information.

39. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information comprises capacity information.

40. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information comprises plant location information.

41. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein:

each of the manufacturing organizations is capable of manufacturing a product; and

the manufacturing organization information for each of the manufacturing organizations comprises the product for the manufacturing organization.

42. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein:

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each of the manufacturing organizations is capable of manufacturing a

product within at least one product classification; and

the manufacturing organization information for each of the manufacturing

organizations comprises the at least one product classification for the

5   manufacturing organization.

43.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing

organization information communicating comprises communicating the

manufacturing organization information in a normalized format.

44.   A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising excluding the

10   product brand information from the manufacturing organizations.

45.   A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising excluding the

manufacturing information from the product brand manager.

46.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information

communicating comprises communicating the product brand information to

15   comprise a general recipe.

47.   A method as recited in claim 46, wherein the processing comprises

converting the general recipe to a plurality of master recipes, and comparing the

plurality of master recipes to the manufacturing organization information.

48.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information

20   processing comprises formatting the product brand information to comprise a

general recipe.

49.   A method as recited in claim 46, wherein the processing comprises converting the general recipe to a plurality of master recipes, and comparing the plurality of master recipes to the manufacturing organization information.

50.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the processing comprises providing a normalized set of process parameters, and converting the product brand information to the normalized set of process parameters.

51.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information communication comprises providing a normalized set of process parameters, and providing the manufacturing organization information for each of the manufacturing organizations as the normalized set of process parameters.

52.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the processing comprises providing a normalized set of process parameters, and converting the manufacturing organization information for each of the manufacturing organizations to the normalized set of process parameters.

53.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the processing comprises:

providing a normalized set of process parameters;

converting the product brand information to the normalized set of process parameters; and

converting the manufacturing organization information to the normalized set of process parameters.

54.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information is stored in a database.

55.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information is stored in a distributed database.

5   56.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the product brand information is stored in a secure database.

57.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information is stored in a database.

58.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing
10   organization information is stored in a distributed database.

59.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the manufacturing organization information is stored in a secure database.

60.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein:

the product brand information comprises a general recipe; and

15   the processing comprises converting the general recipe into at least one master recipe.

61.   A method as recited in claim 60, wherein the processing comprises converting the general recipe into a plurality of the master recipes.

62.   A method as recited in claim 61, wherein the processing comprises
20   comparing the plurality of the master recipes with the manufacturing organization information.

63.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein:

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the product brand information comprises steps required to make the product

brand;

the manufacturing organization information comprises steps capable of being

carried out by the manufacturing organization; and

5   the processing comprises comparing the product brand information steps

with the manufacturing organization steps to identify a match.

64.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least one candidate

manufacturing organization selection comprises selecting as the at least one

candidate manufacturing organization each of the manufacturing organizations

10   that has at least one master recipe for the general recipe for the product brand.

65.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least one candidate

manufacturing organization selection comprises assessing the extent to which each

of the manufacturing organizations matches the product brand information and

assigning to each of the manufacturing organizations a score, and including within

15   the selection information each of the at least one candidate manufacturing

organizations for which the score is above a threshold value.

66.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least one candidate

manufacturing organization selection comprises assessing the extent to which each

of the manufacturing organizations matches the product brand information and

20   assigning to each of the manufacturing organizations a score, and including within

the at least one candidate manufacturing organizations a predetermined number of

the manufacturing organizations having the highest of the scores.

67.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least one candidate manufacturing organization selection comprises assessing the extent to which each of the manufacturing organizations matches the product brand information and assigning to each of the manufacturing organizations a rank, and including within the selection information each of the at least one candidate manufacturing organizations in order of the rank.

68.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least one candidate manufacturing organization selection comprises assessing the extent to which each of the manufacturing organizations matches the product brand information satisfies a weighted set of selection criteria.

69.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the selection information comprises the number of manufacturing organizations comprising the at least one candidate manufacturing organizations.

70.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the selection information comprises information sufficient to confirm that the at least one candidate manufacturing organization can manufacture the product brand according to the product brand information, but the selection information excludes information sufficient to identify the at least one candidate manufacturing organization.

71.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the selection information comprises information useful to the product brand manager.

72.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the selection information comprises price information.

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73.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the selection information

comprises public selection information and private selection information; and

the selection information communicating comprises communicating the

authorized selection information to the product brand manager and withholding the

5   unauthorized selection information from the product brand manager.

74.   A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the communication of the

selection information to the product brand manager comprises communicating the

selection information to a product brand manager computer accessible by the

product brand manager.

10   75.   A method as recited in claim 74, wherein the communication of the

selection information to the product brand manager comprises communicating the

selection information automatically upon the selection of the at least one candidate

manufacturing organization, without human intervention.

76.   A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising communicating the

15   selection information to the at least one candidate manufacturing organization.

77.   A method for facilitating transactions between a product brand

manager and manufacturing organizations using a transactional computer system,

the product brand manager having a product brand and product brand information

comprising information for manufacturing the product brand, and there being

20   manufacturing organization information for each of the manufacturing

organizations comprising the manufacturing process capabilities of the respective

manufacturing organization, the method comprising:

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communicating the product brand information from the product brand

manager to the transactional computer system;

communicating the manufacturing organization information for the

manufacturing organizations from the manufacturing organizations to the

5   transactional computer system;

using the transactional computer system to process the product brand

information and the manufacturing organization information to select at least one

candidate manufacturing organization from the manufacturing organizations and to

generate selection information regarding the at least one candidate manufacturing

10   organization, the selection being carried out by the transactional computer system

and comprising

confirming that the product brand information comprises a general recipe

and to the extent the confirmation is not made, converting the product brand

information into the general recipe,

15   converting the general recipe into a plurality of master recipes, and

comparing the product brand information to the manufacturing organization

information; and

using the transactional computer system to communicate the selection

information to the product brand manager.

20   78.   A method as recited in claim 77, wherein the communicating of the

product brand information from the product brand manager to the transactional

computer system is performed without human intervention at the transactional computer system.

79.   A method as recited in claim 77, wherein the communicating of the manufacturing organization information for the manufacturing organizations from the manufacturing organizations to the transactional computer system is performed without human intervention at the transactional computer system.

80.   A method as recited in claim 77, wherein the using of the transactional computer system to process the product brand information and the manufacturing organization information to select at least one candidate manufacturing organization from the manufacturing organizations and to generate selection information regarding the at least one candidate manufacturing organization is performed without human intervention at the transactional computer system.

81.   A method as recited in claim 77, wherein the use of the transactional computer system to compare the product brand information to the manufacturing organization information is performed without human intervention at the transactional computer system.

82.   A method as recited in claim 77, wherein the use of the transactional computer system to communicate the selection information to the product brand manager is performed without human intervention at the transactional computer system.

83.   A method for facilitating transactions between a manufacturing organization and product brand managers using a transactional computer system,

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each of the product brand managers having a product brand and product brand information comprising information for manufacturing the product brand, and there being manufacturing organization information for the manufacturing organization comprising the manufacturing process capabilities of the manufacturing

5   organization, the method comprising:

communicating the product brand information from the product brand managers to the transactional computer system;

communicating the manufacturing organization information for the manufacturing organization from the manufacturing organization to the

10   transactional computer system;

using the transactional computer system to process the product brand information and the manufacturing organization information to select at least one candidate product brand manager from the product brand managers and to generate selection information regarding the at least one candidate product brand

15   managers, the selection comprising using the transactional computer system to compare the product brand information to the manufacturing organization information; and

using the transactional computer system to communicate the selection information to the manufacturing information.

20   84.   A system for facilitating transactions between a product brand manager and manufacturing organizations, the product brand manager having a product brand and product brand information comprising information for

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manufacturing the product brand, and there being manufacturing organization

information for each of the manufacturing organizations comprising the

manufacturing process capabilities of the respective manufacturing organization,

the system comprising:

5   a network comprising a transactional computer system, at least one product

brand manager computer and a plurality of manufacturing organization computers,

each of the manufacturing organizations having one of the plurality of the

manufacturing organization computers;

       the product brand manager computer comprising a storage device for storing

10   the product brand information and communication means for communicating the

product brand information to the transactional computer system;

       each of the manufacturing organization computers comprising a storage

device for storing the manufacturing organization information for the

manufacturing, and communication means for communicating the manufacturing

15   organization information to the transactional computer system;

       the transactional computer system comprising a processor for processing the

product brand information and the manufacturing organization information to

select at least one candidate manufacturing organization from the manufacturing

organizations and to generate selection information regarding the at least one

20   candidate manufacturing organization; and

communications means for communicating the selection information to the
product brand manager computer without human intervention at the transactional
computer system.

85. A system for facilitating transactions between a manufacturing

5 organization and product brand managers, each of the product brand managers
having a product brand and product brand information comprising information for
manufacturing the product brand, and there being manufacturing organization
information for the manufacturing organization comprising the manufacturing
process capabilities of the manufacturing organization, the system comprising:

10 a network comprising a transactional computer system, at least one
manufacturing organization computer and a plurality of product brand manager
computers, each of the product brand computers having one of the plurality of the
product brand manager computers;

each of the product brand manager computers comprising a storage device for

15 storing the product brand information and communication means for
communicating the product brand information to the transactional computer
system;

the manufacturing organization computer comprising a storage device for
storing the manufacturing organization information for the manufacturing, and

20 communication means for communicating the manufacturing organization
information to the transactional computer system;

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the transactional computer system comprising a processor for processing the

product brand information and the manufacturing organization information to

select at least one candidate product brand manager from the product brand

managers and to generate selection information regarding the at least one

5   candidate product brand managers; and

communications means for communicating the selection information to the

manufacturing organization computer without human intervention at the

transactional computer system.